

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Original) A thread storage and dispensing apparatus comprising:
a storage container comprising:
spaced apart side, top and bottom outer walls and a back wall defining a rectilinear container,
a handle with a top edge located on the exterior of said top outer wall,
horizontal and vertical dividers within said container forming an array of pockets with multiple rows and multiple columns including a top row adjacent to said top outer wall, and said pockets sized to receive spools of thread;
a first array of slots sized for thread to pass through located on said top outer wall, at least one slot located above each of said pockets forming said top row; and
a second array of slots sized for thread to pass through located on said top edge of said handle.
2. (Original) A thread storage and dispensing apparatus of claim 1 in which the storage container includes at least two layers of said pockets.
3. (Original) A thread storage and dispensing apparatus of claim 1 wherein each said first slot located on said top outer wall is rectilinearly shaped with two interior edges spaced apart for thread to pass through, with said slot terminating in an arcuate shape.
4. (Original) A thread storage and dispensing apparatus of claim 1 wherein each said second slot located on said handle is v-shaped with two interior edges spaced apart at said top edge of said handle and said interior edges narrowing then forming a circular guide hole.
5. (Original) A thread storage and dispensing apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a thread cutter located on said handle.
6. (Original) A thread storage and dispensing apparatus of claim 1 further wherein the horizontal dividers below the top row of pockets include a relief in the horizontal divider extending back towards the back wall of the container to allow easy access to the spools of thread stored in a pocket.

7. (Original) A thread storage and dispensing apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a base plate temporarily attachable to the exterior of said bottom outer wall for stabilizing said container.

8. (Original) A thread storage and dispensing apparatus of claim 7 further comprising reliefs in the horizontal and vertical dividers for storage of said base plate within said container.

9. (Original) A thread storage and dispensing apparatus of claim 7 wherein said base plate has top and bottom sides wherein the top side temporarily attaches to the exterior of the bottom outer wall of the storage and dispensing apparatus and the bottom side of the base plate is relieved towards the top side of the base plate forming a pocket in which printed material may be stored.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) A method of claim 10 for storing and dispensing thread from a container storing multiple spools of thread comprising:
positioning multiple spools of thread adjacent to an outer wall of the container;
passing separate strands of thread from said multiple spools of thread through separate first slots located on the outer wall of said container; and
tensioning each separate strand of thread by passing each separate strand of thread through separate second slots spaced from the first slots on the container
wherein the container includes a handle and said second slots are located on said handle.

12. (Currently Amended) A method of claim 10 including for storing and dispensing thread from a container storing multiple spools of thread comprising:
positioning multiple spools of thread adjacent to an outer wall of the container;
passing separate strands of thread from said multiple spools of thread through separate first slots located on the outer wall of said container; and

tensioning each separate strand of thread by passing each separate strand of thread through separate second slots spaced from the first slots on the container and positioned on an outward extension of the container.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Currently Amended) A thread storage and dispensing apparatus of claim 13 further comprising:

a storage container comprising:

spaced apart side, top and bottom outer walls and a back wall defining a rectilinear container,

a handle with a top edge located on the exterior of said top outer wall,

horizontal and vertical dividers within said container forming an array of pockets with multiple rows and multiple columns including a top row adjacent to said top outer wall, and said pockets sized to receive spools of thread;

an array of slots sized for thread to pass through located on said top outer wall, at least one slot located above each of said pockets forming said top row; [[and]]

a base plate with a top and bottom side temporarily attachable to the exterior of said bottom outer wall for stabilizing said container; and

reliefs in the horizontal and vertical dividers for storage of said base plate within said container.

15. (Currently Amended) A thread storage and dispensing apparatus of claim 13 comprising:

a storage container comprising:

spaced apart side, top and bottom outer walls and a back wall defining a rectilinear container,

a handle with a top edge located on the exterior of said top outer wall,

horizontal and vertical dividers within said container forming an array of pockets with multiple rows and multiple columns including a top row adjacent to said top outer wall, and said pockets sized to receive spools of thread;

an array of slots sized for thread to pass through located on said top outer wall, at least one slot located above each of said pockets forming said top row; and

a base plate with a top and bottom side temporarily attachable to the exterior of said bottom outer wall for stabilizing said container, wherein the top side of said base plate temporarily attaches to the exterior of the bottom outer wall of the storage and dispensing apparatus and the bottom side of the base plate is relieved towards the top side of the base plate forming a pocket in which printed material may be stored.

16. (Currently Amended) A thread storage and dispensing apparatus ~~of claim 13~~ comprising:

a storage container comprising:

spaced apart side, top and bottom outer walls and a back wall defining a rectilinear container,

a handle with a top edge located on the exterior of said top outer wall,

horizontal and vertical dividers within said container forming an array of pockets with multiple rows and multiple columns including a top row adjacent to said top outer wall, and said pockets sized to receive spools of thread;

an array of slots sized for thread to pass through located on said top outer wall, at least one slot located above each of said pockets forming said top row; and

a base plate with a top and bottom side temporarily attachable to the exterior of said bottom outer wall for stabilizing said container, wherein the base plate has ridges on the top side of the plate and the container has a lid forming a front wall to the layer of pockets wherein the ridges spaced to fit snugly against the closed container when the container sits on the base plate.

17. (Currently Amended) A thread storage and dispensing apparatus ~~of claim 13~~ comprising:

a storage container comprising:

spaced apart side, top and bottom outer walls and a back wall defining a rectilinear container,

a handle with a top edge located on the exterior of said top outer wall,

horizontal and vertical dividers within said container forming an array of pockets with multiple rows and multiple columns including a top row adjacent to said top outer wall, and said pockets sized to receive spools of thread;

an array of slots sized for thread to pass through located on said top outer wall, at least one slot located above each of said pockets forming said top row; and

a base plate with a top and bottom side temporarily attachable to the exterior of said bottom outer wall for stabilizing said container, wherein the base plate has ridges on the top side and wherein the horizontal and vertical dividers have reliefs such that the base plate fits within the container with the lid closed, and the dividers and the ridges are mutually spaced to fit the ridges alongside the horizontal dividers.

18. (Original) A thread storage and dispensing apparatus of claim 17 wherein the container has a lid forming a front wall to the layer of pockets wherein the ridges of the base plate fit snugly against the closed container when the container sits on the base plate.